

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-08 AID-05 AGRE-00 COME-00 HEW-04
IGA-02 IO-13 DIWY-01 H-01 TRSE-00 /081 W
-----067958 171636Z /41
R 171400Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3294

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EO 11652 NA
TAGS SPOP, BR
SUBJECT: POPULATION INFORMATION

REF: (A) STATE 167895; (B) BRASILIA 6566; (C) BRASILIA A-80;
D) 76 BRASILIA 2153

1. SUMMARY. THE POPULATION OF BRAZIL CONTINUES TO GROW AT A HIGH RATE WITH SOME INDICATIONS OF A SLOWLY DECREASING TREND. THE GOB HAS JUST ANNOUNCED ITS FIRST IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS BUCHAREST CONFERENCE POSITION WITH A PROGRAM TO REDUCE HIGH-RISK PREGNANCY, WHICH IS TOO LIMITED IN SIZE AND SCOPE TO INFLUENCE BIRTH RATES SIGNIFICANTLY. THE FUTURE OF THE EXISTING NON-GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAM IN FAMILY PLANNING, ASSISTED BY IPPF, IS IN DOUBT AT THIS TIME. NO MAJOR CHANGES IN NON-POPULATION POLICY WHICH MIGHT HAVE SIGNIFICANT POPULATION IMPACT HAVE OCCURRED. THE OVERALL FOOD SUPPLY SITUATION IS VERY FAVORABLE, ALTHOUGH NUTRITIONAL PROBLEMS AND LACK OF EFFECTIVE DEMAND EXIST DUE TO POVERTY. END SUMMARY.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: ACCORDING TO GOB SOURCES, MID-1976 POPULATION IN BRAZIL WAS ESTIMATED TO BE 110.1 MILLION. 60.6 PERCENT LIVED IN URBAN AREAS AND 39.4 PERCENT IN RURAL AREAS. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF BIRTHS FOR 1975 WERE 4.314 MILLION (INCLUD

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ING 67.5 THOUSANDS STILLBIRTHS) (38.6 PER THOUSAND INHABITANTS); FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 1976 2.3 MILLION BIRTHS WERE ESTIMATED TO HAVE OCCURRED (INCLUDING 32.7 THOUSAND STILLBIRTHS). ALTHOUGH MORTALITY INDICES FOR 1975 AND 1976 ARE NOT AVAILABLE, THE BRAZILIAN CENTER FOR DEMOGRAPHIC STUDIES HAS ESTIMATED THAT THE GROSS MORTALITY INDEX FOR THE 1975-1980 QUINQUENNIAL WILL BE AROUND 8 PER THOUSAND INHABITANTS. THE SAME CENTER ESTIMATED THAT THE POPULATION OF

BRAZIL IN THE YEAR 2000 WILL BE BETWEEN 200 AND 220 MILLION INHABITANTS, MORE PROBABLY NEAR THE LOWER LIMIT, BUT PROBABLY OVER THE 200 MILLION FIGURE.

3. POPULATION PROGRAMS: THE GOB HAS VERY RECENTLY ADOPTED ITS FIRST OFFICIAL POPULATION PROGRAM, WITH THE INCLUSION OF A SMALL FAMILY PLANNING COMPONENT (FOR HIGH-RISK PREGNANCY CASES ONLY) IN A NEW HEALTH PROGRAM FOR MATERNAL-CHILD ASSISTANCE, AS REPORTED IN REFTEL B. IN THE PRIVATE AND STATE GOVERNMENT AREAS, THE ASSOCIACAO CIVIL DE BEM ESTAR FAMILIAR NO BRAZIL (BEMFAM), A PRIVATE ORGANIZATION AND AN IPPF AFFILIATE, HAS OPERATED MAINLY IN CBD IN AGREEMENT WITH SOME STATE SECRETARIATS OF HEALTH. THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF RIO DE JANEIRO HAS A SMALL PROGRAM IN MATERNAL-CHILD ASSISTANCE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF DR. AGUINAGA, WHICH INCLUDES FAMILY PLANNING. DR. AGUINAGA IS CURRENTLY SEEKING INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO EXPAND HIS PROGRAM. DETAILED INFORMATION ON BOTH THESE PROGRAMS WAS SENT IN JUNE IN REF C.

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: IN THE ABSENCE OF AN OFFICIAL FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM IN BRAZIL, MOST OF THE WORK IN THIS FIELD HAS BEEN CONDUCTED BY BEMFAM. THROUGH ITS COMMUNITY RESOURCE MOBILIZATION PROGRAM, FOR FAMILY PLANNING, BEMFAM HAS, SINCE ITS CREATION IN 1967, DEVELOPED INTENSIVE EFFORTS TO CALL THE ATTENTION OF BRAZILIAN LEADERS TO THE DESIRABILITY OF ADOPTING FAMILY PLANNING IN THE COUNTRY AS WELL AS TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS FOR ITS COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES. BEMFAM HAS ALWAYS STATED THAT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MOTIVATION OF LEADERS WAS ITS FIRST AND FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVE, AND THE RECENT GOB INITIATIVES IN THE AREA OF FAMILY PLANNING SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT BEMFAM HAS SUCCEEDED IN ITS ENDEAVORS. SINCE MORE DIRECT USG ASSISTANCE TO FAMILY PLANNING IN BRAZIL HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEGUN (THROUGH AID INTERMEDIARIES) IT IS STILL EARLY TO MAKE AN ACCURATE EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUCH ASSISTANCE. IF BEMFAM IS TO EXPAND ITS CBD PROGRAM, IT WILL CERTAINLY REQUIRE ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE, BUT ANY USG MOVE IN THIS FIELD IN BRAZIL AT THIS TIME SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH GREAT CAUTION IN VIEW OF THE RECENT GOB INITIATIVES IN THIS AREA. RECENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN

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A BEMFAM OFFICIAL AND AN EMBASSY OFFICER HAVE REVEALED THAT BEMFAM IS STILL UNCERTAIN AS TO ITS FUTURE. THAT REPRESENTATIVE ENVISAGES THE FOLLOWING PROBABLE FUTURE COURSES FOR BEMFAM: (A) TO CONTINUE ITS PROGRAM AS IT IS, UNMOLESTED BY THE GOVERNMENT; (B) TO BE ALLOWED TO OPERATE IN AREAS NOT COVERED BY THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM; (C) TO ADOPT SOME CHANGES IN ITS CURRENT LINES OF ACTION IN ORDER TO FIT THE GOVERNMENT'S REQUIREMENT AND PARTICIPATE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM; (D) TO BE UTILIZED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN A TECHNICAL OR ADVISORY CAPACITY, AND (E) TO BE SACRIFICED IN FAVOR OF THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, IF PUBLIC REACTION AGAINST THE GOB PROGRAM BECOMES UNBEARABLE. THE BEMFAM REPRESENTATIVE STATED THAT AS OF THIS DATE THEY HAD NOT YET BECOME FULLY FAMILIAR WITH THE DETAILS OF THE ANNOUNCED GOB PROGRAM AND WERE NOT YET IN A POSITION TO EVALUATE BEMFAM'S FUTURE ROLE IN FAMILY PLANNING IN BRAZIL.

4. RELEVANT NON-POPULATION PROGRAMS: THE VIEWS OF THE EMBASSY AS STATED LAST YEAR IN PARAGRAPHS 1 THROUGH 4 AND 7 THROUGH 15 OF REFTEL D REMAIN APPLICABLE. LITTLE HAS HAPPENED DURING THE YEAR TO MODIFY THE ANALYSIS. THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED PROGRAM TO SPEND AN ADDITIONAL 2.7 BILLION CRUZEIROS (APPR. \$185 MILLION) OVER FOUR YEARS IN AN ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THE EDUCATIONAL, NUTRITIONAL, AND MEDICAL NEEDS OF EXPECTANT MOTHERS AND NEWBORNS WILL BE LITERALLY FINDED AT 99 PERCENT TRADITIONAL MATERNAL-CHILD HEALTH CARE AND ONE PERCENT AVOIDANCE OF "HIGH-RISK" PREGNANCIES. THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"PROGRAM OF MATERNAL-INFANT HEALTH" IS A PART OF THE MUCH WIDER HEALTH SCHEME WHICH IS GENERALLY AVAILABLE--INPS. THE LATTER IS PERHAPS AT THE CENTER OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES OFFERED BY THE GOB AND SUBSCRIBED TO BY THE GENERAL POPULATION. REFORMS TO THE INPS SYSTEM ARE BEING CONSIDERED BUT THEIR POSSIBLE IMPACT CANNOT YET BE ASSESSED. EDUCATION, IN THE RURAL AREAS PARTICULARLY, IS UNEVEN AND FOR SOME STILL UNAVAILABLE, BEYOND THE MOST RUDIMENTARY FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES. INCOME DISTRIBUTION IS HIGHLY SKEWED WITH THE LOWER PERCENTILES HAVING RECENTLY FACED A SLIGHT DROP IN REAL INCOME. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS OCCURRING IN THE CENTRAL

AND SOUTHER PARTS OF BRAZIL, ACCOMPANIED PERHAPS BY AN ATTITUDE THAT BRAZIL IS DEVELOPING. IN RELATIONS TO INTERNAL MIGRATION, A FUND WAS RECENTLY CREATED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, TO ASSIST MIGRANTS RETURNING TO THE NORTHEAST FROM URBAN CENTERS (DUE TO UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS THERE) TO RE-ESTABLISH THEMSELVES IN RURAL AREAS.

"WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT" IS HARDLY A THEME IN BRAZIL AT ANY LEVEL OR ANYWHERE, ALTHOUGH SOME FEMINIST SPOKESMAN HAVE UTILIZED A SENATE COMMISSION ON THE PROBLEMS OF WOMEN TO COMPLAIN MORE VIGOROUSLY ON INEQUITIES. ONE WITNESS TESTIFIED THAT WOMEN GENERALLY RECEIVE ONE-FOURTH LESS PAY FOR THE SAME WORK THAN MEN AT ALL LEVELS IN BRAZILIAN SOCIETY. THE PASSAGE OF A LAW THIS YEAR ALLOWING DIVORCE IN BRAZIL WILL, NO DOUBT, INFLUENCE THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETY AND MAY INCREASE THE BIRTH RATE BY LEGALIZING RE-MARRIAGES. A SMALL COUNTERACTING INFLUENCE MAY RESULT FROM A SIGNIFICANT CAMPAIGN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE A RETURN TO BREAST-FEEDING IN THE COUNTRY.

5. FOOD AND POPULATION: THE POTENTIAL FOR EXPANDED FOOD PRODUCTION WITHIN BRAZIL IS GOOD. THERE ARE PROGRAMS UNDERWAY TO DEVELOP THE CERRADO (CENTRAL PLATEAU) REGION, WHICH HAS A POTENTIAL OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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3.7 MILLION HECTARES OF NEW PRODUCTIVE LAND. THIS REGION HAS ABUNDANT, ALTHOUGH SEASONAL, RAINFALL AND IS SUITABLE FOR MECHANIZED FARMING. NO MAJOR WATER RESOURCE PROBLEMS OR SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION OF THE REGION IS FORESEEN AS A NECESSARY CONCOMITANT OF SUCH DEVELOPMENT. USING MODERN FARMING TECHNIQUES THE EXISTING FARM LAND IN THE REST OF BRAZIL COULD ALSO BE MADE MORE PRODUCTIVE. CURRENTLY BRAZIL IS THE WORLD'S SECOND LARGEST EXPORTER OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, AND IT SHOULD REMAIN IN THIS POSITION. EXCEPT FOR WHAT, MILK, AND SOME FRUITS, BRAZIL IS ESSENTIALLY

SELF-SUFFICIENT IN FOODSTUFFS. IMPORTS OF THESE ITEMS SHOULD CONTINUE, BUT BRAZILIAN FOOD EXPORTS ARE EXPECTED TO GREATLY OVERBALANCE SPECIAL FOOD IMPORTS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POPULATION, POLICIES, FAMILY PLANNING, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BRASIL06830
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770297-0024
Format: TEL
From: BRASILIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770855/aaaabtul.tel
Line Count: 212
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 87346b59-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 167895, 77 BRASILIA 6566, 77 BRASILIA A-80
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1581769
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POPULATION INFORMATION
TAGS: SPOP, BR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/87346b59-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009